



HOMELESS EDUCATION RECOGNITION DINNER

The Michigan Department of Education recognizes the following individuals and groups for their service to homeless children and youth in their community.

Don and Lisa Benson

Owners of Benson's Vinaigrettes, Don and Lisa Benson, started a ministry in March of 2005 to feed homeless children and adults. This special ministry, known as "Into the Streets", serves hot gourmet meals to about 300 people a week. Besides providing food to homeless families, the ministry volunteers have also provided coats, clothing and blankets. "Into the Streets" has also partnered with Mt. Hope Church to provide transportation to Sunday church services.

Carla Ciesa and Kadria Twohig

Carla is a 2nd grade teacher at Kalamazoo Advantage Academy and Kadria was the 2nd grade instruction assistant during the 2005-06 school year. These two very giving teachers often buy families laundry supplies and household items while mostly going unnoticed by others. They believe in respecting the privacy and dignity of others and go above the call of duty. They are great examples of living by the "Golden Rule."

Theresa Cosentino

The Pontiac School District collaborates with the Oakland ISD and community shelters and other agencies to ensure the needs of the homeless students and their families are met as mandated. Theresa Cosentino, Secretary for the Office of Instructional Improvement & Special Services coordinates the homeless programs. She receives information regarding youths and contacts the schools and makes arrangements for transportation ASAP, ensuring that students are appropriately welcomed to the new home school. She greets parents and youths with respect, kindness and professionalism.

Faith Reformed Church

Faith Reform Church has adopted the Traverse City Area Public School's homeless program in the past by providing a clothing drive as well as cash assistance.



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Host Homes for Homeless Youth

The Host Homes for Homeless Youth program was begun by Barb Vinocur and Jean Peltola of Traverse City West Senior High, and is now coordinated by MaryBeth Novak of Catholic Human Services.

Unaccompanied high school youth are offered a Host Home to provide a safe, stable home environment, and to ensure attendance at school until graduation. Host Homes are provided a \$10 per night stipend.

In their third year of operation, Host Homes is a joint program between Catholic Human Services, TBAISD, and all area high schools. It is funded through United Way, Rotary Charities, Children's Trust Fund, and other local charities.

Host Homes serves Grand Traverse, Antrim, Kalkaska, Leelanau, and Benzie counties.

Janet McDowell

Mrs. McDowell was able to raise \$3,000 for three college scholarships for students who were homeless in their senior year in high school. These scholarships were given through the Lenawee County Education Foundation. There are plans to continue this scholarship program again in the 2006-2007 school year.

Jane Myers, Director, Dochas II

Ms. Myers pursued a grant to service runaway and homeless youth. Lenawee County was greatly underserved by this grant in the past and Ms. Myers was instrumental in securing this grant for Dochas II and actively serving the youth of Lenawee and Monroe Counties. This program has become an advocate for youth services and is heavily involved in working to alleviate homelessness among this population.

Dochas II serves Jackson, Hillsdale, Lenawee, and Monroe Counties.



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Program for Accelerated and Creative Education (PACE)

In November 2004 staff from the Oakland Schools Homeless Student Education Program (OSHEP) went out to talk to the PACE class. The class learned about the definition, causes, and consequences of homelessness. Information was shared about the McKinney Vento Act and what Oakland Schools was doing to try to assure students remained in school and were successful. The students became very excited as they contemplated the impact that they could have in their community for the homeless. The PACE students were motivated to take on a two year project to be completed in their fourth and fifth grade years. Their overall goal was to "help support homeless families". Their project was a tremendous success and they were able to help in the following ways:

- Organized a supply drive for needed school supplies and clothing for students.
 - Fundraising to raise money to purchase additional supplies.
 - Helped in the provision of transportation.
 - Created a networking tool for services already available in the community.
 - Increased community awareness of homelessness and the needs of those experiencing homelessness.
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Janet Rodriguez

Throughout the years as lunch coordinator for the Cesar Chavez Academy, Janet Rodriguez has always extended herself to all kids through her smiles and tough love as a mother teaching kids the importance of being of good character, but especially those kids that are homeless. She is one that always shows her love, extends her hand, provides a meal, or opens her home to youth in our community. She has provided a safe place on numerous occasions whether temporary or on a more long-term basis for young people, especially teens that are troubled who come from chaotic home situations. She is always there for them being that angel for them who holds them under her wing by providing them with a ride, making sure they are coming to school, checking on them to ensure they are doing well in school, and offering her wonderful words of wisdom. She does this even as she struggles with her own 3 children. She and her husband are true angels here on earth and in Southwest Detroit they are known as tia and tio (aunt and uncle). She is so loved and knows so much about our youth and always has their best interest at heart.



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United Bank and Trust

United Bank and Trust conducted a school supplies drive for the homeless education programs of Lenawee and Washtenaw County. They brought in over 14,000 school supplies!!



Western Lakes Activity Association (WLAA)

For years, representatives from each school met to collaborate on many items. For the past two years, this group has combined their school's efforts to help an organization in need. They asked Wayne-Westland Community School District's Family Resource Center (FRC) to help facilitate the distribution of donated items to families who were currently experiencing homelessness. Items were collected and presented to the FRC for three months. Most of the thousands of items donated went directly to the Wayne County Family Center. Some items remained at the FRC for distribution to families who were experiencing homelessness that did not reside at a shelter, but in hotels, motels, and the like. Items donated included, but were not limited to, towels, sheets, shampoo, conditioner, diapers, wipes, washcloths, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand cream, make-up, hair supplies, paper, pencils, pens, erasers, notebooks, and markers.

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Organized a supply drive for needed school supplies and clothing for students.

In December 2004 the students created posters asking for school supplies and books. The posters were hung around the school. Flyers went home with the students asking for donations. An announcement was put in the neighborhood newsletter. As a result, items flooded in. Soon children's books, binders, folders, pens, and markers filled the collections boxes. Several members of the team asked to do extra chores at home to earn money to purchase school supplies for the project.

At the end of June 2005, they asked the principal if they could have the bags of lost and found clothes that accumulated throughout the year. They eyed the coats, boots, snow pants, lunchboxes, tee shirts and pants, knowing that the homeless students could use those items. They received five big bags of items. Five members of the team did loads of laundry, folded clothing and repackaged the items for donation.

In the fall of 2005 they started a campaign to collect coats, mittens, hats, socks, and underwear. They collected over 100 coats, 50 gloves and hats and 25 packages of undies. They were delivered to OSHEP for distribution to children in need.

In addition to collected supplies, the PACE students donated approximately 10,000 school supplies and 250 children's books. The items were donated to the OSHEP program. Using the PACE student's supplies over 250 backpacks were put together by adult students from the Oakland Schools Autism program. OSHEP was able to distribute these to the 28 local school districts in the county for use by homeless students who needed them.

Fundraising to raise money to purchase additional supplies.

The students were interested in fund raising to provide for the purchase of school supplies and to fund transportation assistance for homeless students. They decided on asking a community restaurant, Nosh's Diner, to donate the use of their business for an evening. The PACE students helped set the tables, serve water, bus tables and clean up. The students also organized a Bake Sale for in front of the restaurant that evening. The event was a great success. When the night was over,

they had earned \$1,023!!! Additionally, Sams Club found out about the project and offered to match their funds up to a \$1,000 cash donation.

Helped in the provision of Transportation.

The PACE students had learned from OSHEP that many homeless families do have cars and are willing to drive their students back to their own schools, but most cannot afford the expensive gas to fill their tanks. In the summer of 2005, they contacted Marathon Petroleum Company and shared information about their project. They were interested in partnering with PACE and committed to match gas card purchases with a donation of gas cards. The students decided to purchase \$500 in gas cards. With the matching donation, the PACE students were able to donate \$1000 worth of gas cards to the OSHEP program to be distributed to homeless students needing transportation assistance. On the day of the gas card purchase and presentation (covered by local media), the owner of the local Marathon station, Mr. Ali Hammoud, impressed with the students and their project decided to contribute \$300 to the cause.

Created a Networking Tool for Services already available in the Community

During their research on homelessness in Oakland County, the PACE students were surprised to learn that there was no single source of information regarding the supports available in the community to help homeless individuals. If a person wanted help, they would have to contact all sorts of local agencies and may not qualify for help. The students decided that a reference tool was needed to make finding appropriate services easier. In March 2005 they sent out a mass mailing to 110 service agencies that help the homeless. They licked a lot of envelopes that day. In the letter they requested that the agencies complete a survey regarding their services. Throughout the school year, they received 66 responses. The principal couldn't believe how much mail they were getting! They opened mail, sorted it and sent it home with a student who compiled a spreadsheet with the help of his mom. In October 2005, as fifth graders, they sent out another mass mailing to the organizations who responded to the survey. Each of them received the resource grid. If an organization is helping a homeless person they can refer to the grid to easily find contact information for needed services. The PACE students continue to receive updates from the organizations for services they offer. The resource grid has become a tool that the OSHEP coordinator uses on a daily basis in helping families.

Increased Community Awareness of Homelessness and the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

The PACE students were able to maximize the impact of their project by using their activities to promote community awareness of homelessness and the needs of the homeless. They utilized community newsletters, public postings and press releases. As a result, they were featured the day of their Nosh's diner fundraiser on WWJ Newsradio 950. The students were interviewed on air regarding their project. The interview and promotion of the fundraiser were repeated throughout the day! The students were also featured in six different news articles over the last year. In April 2006, they were interviewed and featured on the local FOX affiliate evening news. The story highlighted the student project and the needs of the homeless in Oakland County

Host Homes for Homeless Youth

Homelessness in NW MI -

It's hard to believe we have young people living on the streets of our communities, and when a high school student is homeless, staying in school, maintaining good grades, and graduating is very difficult. Our region has taken an important step in addressing this need. We invite you to read this brochure and consider being a host home for a homeless youth.

Host Homes for Homeless Youth is funded by grants from United Way of Northwest Michigan, Michigan Children's Trust Fund, Rotary Good Works Committee, and Rotary Sunrise Club. The program, administered by Catholic Human Services and delivered with support from Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD), serves students who are enrolled in schools within Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau counties.



Catholic Human Services

*1000 Hastings Street
Traverse City, MI 49686
231.947.8110*



1101 Red Drive PO Box 6020
Traverse City, MI 49696
231.922.6200

HOST HOMES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

A Safe Haven
For Homeless Youth
In NW Michigan

Program Goal and Need

Our goal is to provide safe, stable, supervised homes for homeless high school students, which will enable them to continue attending high school. Reunification with their own family is always our goal, when appropriate.

Why don't these teens have a stable living arrangement?

The Host Homes Program provides support to adolescents who are unaccompanied -which means they are not living at home with a parent or guardian. Students are homeless for a variety of reasons; primarily because their parents have told them to leave home. Many are faced with an environment that is no longer a safe place for them to live because of verbal, physical, or sexual abuse and/or parental drug abuse.

The risk for these teens:

Without stable living arrangements, they are likely to engage in high-risk behavior for day to day survival. They may participate in illegal activities or "survival" sex to meet their needs for shelter, food, transportation and clothing. And, they are at high risk for dropping out of school.

HOST HOMES: How it works

Interested individuals or families will complete an application for participation in the program and undergo a criminal background check. Orientation training will be offered, as well as on-going support. An opportunity to meet and interview a potential guest student is arranged prior to placement. A \$10.00 per night stipend for each student is provided to the Host Home to assist with daily living expenses. Student may be placed for only a few days, or up to the completion of a school year.

Students must sign a Participation Contract. A student's legal guardian delegates Power of Attorney to the Host Home family. The program is totally voluntary for both parties.

Host Homes is also in need of respite providers to offer short term assistance to existing Host Home families, if personal needs require the family to leave the student unsupervised.

For more information or to become a valuable host home provider: Contact Mary Beth Novak, Catholic Human Services, at 231-947-8110, or Rosemary Hagan, TBAISD, at 231-922-7838.

REQUEST FOR HOST HOMES

APPLICATION & AUTHORIZATION FOR BACKGROUND CHECK

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email: _____

Social Security #(s) _____

SS# is required on all members living in household over 18 years + for background record check.

I am interested in:

☐ Host Home Family

☐ Providing occasional respite

Mail this form to the attention of Mary Beth Novak, Catholic Human Services, 1000 Hastings Street, Traverse City, MI 49686.